

Threads of Life:

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from
Guatemala



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Threads of Life: Mayan Clothing from Guatemala

May 2 - December 31, 1993
Kauffman Museum
Bethel College
North Newton, KS 67117

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(see pages 20 and 21)



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Woman's
ceremonial
blouse, *huipil*.
Chichicastenango,
El Quiché.
(see page 18)



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Foreword

6

Guatemala is a country that is smaller than the state of Kansas. Of its nine million people more than 50% are Mayan Indian who speak at least seventeen different languages—languages as different from each other as French is from Spanish or German from Dutch.

Even greater variety exists, in color and pattern, in the traditional dress, the *traje* of these many Mayan communities, of which forty-nine are represented through weavings and other artifacts in this exhibition. In traditional Mayan society nearly every woman was a weaver, producing clothing for her family.

Today there are still thousands of Mayan women weavers, creating brilliantly colored and patterned works of wearable art which imbue their patterns of daily living with uncommon visual vibrancy. If we can imagine that every county and every town in Kansas has its own brilliantly colored costume handloomed by every other woman in each county during her spare time after all other work is done, following the patterns she has memorized from the weavings of

her mother and grandmother, then we begin to appreciate the magnificent weaving tradition of the Mayan Indians of Guatemala.

With "Threads of Life: Mayan Clothing from Guatemala" Kauffman Museum presents for the first time Mary and Paul McKay's collection of Guatemalan Mayan textiles and related artifacts of everyday Mayan Indian life. The McKays, associate professors of international development at Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas, lived, worked, and raised a family in Guatemala from 1964 to 1980. Paul was the Central America representative for World Neighbors, and Mary worked for World Neighbors in the area of nutrition and for OXFAM as a disaster relief consultant. As Mary worked together with Mayan Indian women to improve nutrition and child survival in their communities, it was only natural that she became enchanted with and deeply interested in the women's weavings and traditional Mayan costume or *traje*. Many items of Mayan clothing in her collection were gifts to her and Paul. Their collection grew naturally through their sustained involvement with their Mayan neighbors and friends, and from their deep admiration for the Mayas' gracious, creative, and resilient spirit.

**“ Children, wherever you
may be, do not abandon the
crafts taught to you by
Ixplyacoc, because they are
the crafts passed down to
you by our forefathers.
If you forget them, you will
be betraying your lineage. ”**

Popol Vuh,
the mythological book
of the Quiché Maya

Robert Regier, Kauffman Museum design consultant and neighbor of the McKays, was the first to plant the idea for this exhibition after being struck by the beauty of color and design of Mayan Indian weavings in the McKay home. It was very important to Mary that the interpretation of her and Paul's collection should focus on the interrelationship between art and life in the Mayan communities of highland Guatemala, rather than to single out the virtuosity of the weaving techniques or the aesthetic qualities of the textiles alone. Kauffman Museum is greatly indebted to Mary McKay for giving so generously of herself to this project.

The exhibition is further enriched by textiles and artifacts of traditional clothing from the collection of Walter and Marilyn Adams, who have had a

similarly intensive personal and scholarly relationship with Guatemalan Mayan culture. Walter Adams was born and raised in Guatemala and holds dual citizenship with Guatemala and the United States. As an anthropologist he has conducted extended research in Guatemala on various aspects of Mayan culture. His family has collected Mayan textiles for over seventy years. We owe Walter and Marilyn Adams much gratitude for their enthusiastic support, for their shared knowledge, and for their loans to the exhibition.

Kauffman Museum is also most grateful for the generous support from the Plumsock Mesoamerican Studies Fund which made the publication of this exhibition handbook possible. And many thanks go to Rachel Pannabecker whose inspiring energy and expertise as costume historian and as editor of this catalogue were critical in bringing this project to fruition.

Reinhold Kauenhoven Janzen
Kauffman Museum Curator

Mayan Indian Weaving and Its Symbolism

Walter Randolph Adams

The Maya of Guatemala and southern Mexico were known for producing high quality textiles before the Spanish conquest in 1524. Recovered codices portray the Maya offering cotton textiles as tribute to other groups living in the area (Anawalt, 1981, 191). There is evidence that some textiles were woven so tightly that they were used as armor in warfare (Anawalt, 1981, 188) and protected the wearer from sword blows and arrows. They were also light in weight and "breathed" so the wearer did not suffer from the hot sun.

The Spaniards, under Pedro de Alvarado, entered Guatemala in 1524 searching for gold and silver to send back to the Spanish King. The Conquest was a bloody affair, but Maya legend held that their primary god, Cucumatz, would return about the time the Spanish arrived. This myth helped the Spanish win more easily than might have been the case otherwise. Adding to the god-like image with which they held the Spanish, the Maya had never seen a horse, much less a person riding one. You can imagine what the Maya must have thought when they saw for the first time a Spaniard riding one of these animals covered

with armor. One can better understand why the Maya thought the Spaniards were gods when they saw one of them dismount! No mortal could rip himself apart at the waist and live.

The Spanish did not find the minerals they sought, but they did find fine cotton textiles, which were eagerly received in Spain. The Spaniards also exchanged their chain mail and metal armor for the cotton armor because, as one Spanish document states, “it resists the arrows which could penetrate the strongest coat of mail and even some cuirass” (Anawalt, 1981, 49).

To meet European demand for the textiles, the Spaniards introduced the foot loom and taught the men how to use it. The Spaniards also introduced new weaving motifs with which the European buyers were familiar to enhance the textiles’ marketability. The introduction of sheep provided a new source of thread, wool, and woolen items (like blankets) entered the repertoire. In the nineteenth century, the traditional natural dyes from plants (like indigo--blue) and insects (like cochineal--red) were supplanted by human-made aniline dyes from Germany. In the twentieth century, manufactured and highly-processed fibers such as acrylic and *sedalina* (a cotton fiber resembling silk) increasingly replace cotton, wool, and silk threads. Plummeting cotton prices during the 1970’s and the durability and colorfastness of human-made fibers contributed to the abandonment of cotton production in Guatemala today.

Economic conditions and the military repression of the 1980’s have forced many people to abandon weaving altogether. One might expect that the art of weaving would disappear under these

adverse conditions, but Maya weaving traditions and pride persevere, albeit in diminished form. Today, one may see the Maya wearing any of three different types of clothing. More women than men wear the traditional costume, called *traje*. Many wear traditional-style clothing whose colors and patterns, however, do not convey the identity of the wearer’s community. Still others wear mass-manufactured clothing that you and I can buy in a store anywhere in the world.

Traje is a sign of community affiliation. Each community has a particular clothing style, design motif, and color combination which tells the trained observer from which community the wearer comes. In addition, one can tell a person’s marital status from details such as the direction a woman wraps her skirt—left to right or right to left, or by the width of the sash that held the skirt in place. Motifs woven in the fabric can tell the social class of the wearer and one’s ranking in the family line. In this sense, the motifs, like military insignia, tell us the rank of the wearer. If one looks closely, one can sometimes find a small “flaw” or irregularity in the weaving pattern of a textile. Often, this is the signature of the weaver and as such, is similar to a painter’s signature in the corner of the picture.

Thus, clothing is more than practical protection from the elements; it is a way of conveying one’s place within the community—one’s social relationship to others. As ties to a community decrease, due to economic or other conditions, the meaning of the symbols become obscured or lost. Under these conditions, too, one can begin seeing non-traditional designs coming into use.

Traditionally, to weave was to be a woman. A girl would begin to weave at the age of seven or eight and learn to master her community’s techniques. The quality of her work would be a mark of distinction and a sign of marriageability.

The tightness of the weave, the care she took to use and conserve the thread were indications of her resourcefulness and thrift. Within the confines of her community's traditions, a weaver could embellish the symbols, thus stamping her meaning and personality in the textile.

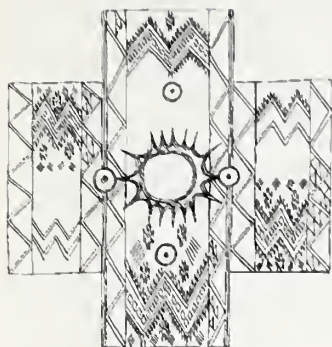
Because weaving was reserved for leisure time after major chores were done, a woman could devote only three or four hours a day to weaving. Thus, one item of clothing could take six months or longer to complete. Due to the length of time involved in production, a person would own only one or two sets of clothing, one for daily wear, another for ceremonial purposes. The pre-Hispanic Maya goddess Ixchel was the deity of weaving and the moon. Prayers were offered to her before beginning a new textile. The draw-

ing of Ixchel from the Codex Tro-Cortesanius, now in the Archaeological Museum in Madrid, shows the goddess weaving on a backstrap loom, a technique that continues to be used by Mayan women today—3000 years or more later. Most of the pieces in this exhibition were made on a backstrap loom. Even today, a woman using a backstrap loom will sit on a mat on the ground. She makes the cloth tight by leaning away from the tree or house post to which the loom is attached and by battening the cross threads after passing the shuttle through. Clothing produced on a backstrap loom is constructed by piecing together two or three rectangular lengths of cloth. In some communities the joining stitches that attach the lengths together are incorporated as one of the design elements in the garment.

Ancient Mayan concepts of the universe and life are woven within the body of a textile. It is difficult to know the precise meaning of a symbol because every person thinks it means something different (Osborne, 1975, 102). In addition, a symbol's meaning can change over time. However, many of the motifs seen in the textiles today can be found in Mayan codices ("books" made of bark dating from before the Spanish conquest) and in ceramic vessels dating from the Late Classic period (AD 600-800). The contexts in which the symbols appear in a textile suggest these meanings have remained consistent over the years. The meaning of these symbols are found in the *Popol Vuh*, the Mayan equivalent of the Bible. Some of these continue to have the same meaning, as expressed by Rigoberta Menchú, a Quiché Indian from the Guatemalan highlands and the Nobel Peace Prize recipient for 1992.



Ixchel, goddess of the moon and weaving. Illustration from the Codex Tro-Cortesanius showing the goddess weaving on a backstrap loom (Pettersen, 1976, 67). Courtesy of the Museo del Traje Indígena, Guatemala City, Guatemala



Woman's ceremonial blouse, *huipil*. The neck hole is embroidered with sunrays, and four moons are applied on the front, the back and the shoulders of the blouse. McKay #92

The Sun and the Moon. *The sun is the father and our mother is the moon. She is a gentle mother. And she lights our way....They are the pillars of the universe* (Menchú, 1983, 13). The sun and the moon represent the interdependent relationship of men and women and the balance of all creation. The sun is a male symbol, the moon a female symbol. The sun provides heat and warmth, and thus gives life to all things. *Heart of the sky, you are our father, we ask you to give your warmth and light to our animals, our maize, our beans, our plants, so that they may grow and our children may eat* (Menchú, 1983, 57). The sun is central to life and a dominant symbol in the clothing. It is portrayed as a circle in the center of the *huipil*. The head, the center of the wearer, emerges out of the center of the textile. A *huipil* is the woman's blouse. The term comes from Nahuatl, the Aztec language. The same term was used for the man's shirt.

The Cross. The cross is often shown as the whole brocaded body of the woman's blouse. It is an equidistant cross with four symmetrical sections and a center point. The four sections represent the four cardinal directions from which the life-giving elements come. The fifth "point" is the center of the universe. The cross connects the

divine elements of life with the fertilization of the earth. Many authors have suggested that the Spanish did not enslave the Maya because the latter believed in the cross. The Spanish introduced the Christian cross. Today, as one travels through Guatemala, one can find the Spanish-style cross in public areas, such as roadside shrines and cemeteries. The Maya-style cross still dominates in the traditional clothing, the *traje*, and in private places because the Spaniards rarely ventured into the rural areas where the Maya lived during the colonial period. The illustration at left shows how the shape of the *huipil* forms an equilateral cross.

The Tree of Life, the Ceiba Tree. The ceiba (*ceiba pentandra*) is a majestic leafy tree that stretches to the heavens. It has a creamy white bark and thorns. This tree was regarded as the tree of life. The Maya believe a ceiba tree was at the center of the earth where it separated heaven and earth. The ceiba tree was also the pathway between earth and heaven (Thomson, 1970, 195). A child who died before being weaned would be wrapped in a mantle and placed in its branches. There the thorns, representing a mother's breast, would provide the child the milk of life in the afterlife. The Tzotzil, who live in Chiapas, Mexico, continued this practice as recently as 1970 (Thompson, 1970, 301).

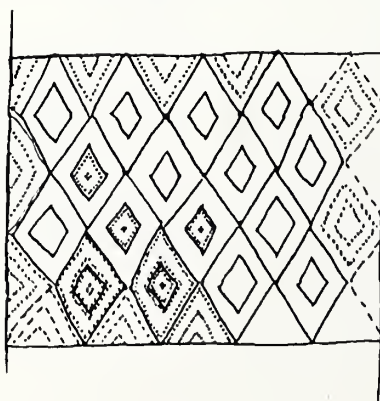


The tree of life. Woven detail from a *huipil*. McKay #100

The Earth and Venus. The earth is the receptacle of the divine elements and fertilizes the sacred crop, corn. The earth provides the food necessary for life and is thus revered. In the words of Rigoberta Menchú: *...every part of our culture comes from the earth. Our religion comes from the maize and bean harvests which are so vital to our community...The earth is like a mother which multiplies life. So the girl child will multiply the life of our generation and of our ancestry whom we must respect...the woman is the mother of the home and the earth is the mother of the whole world—the mother of all our indigenous people. The importance of the mother is related to the importance of the earth. So we usually sit on the ground, on mats our women weave* (Menchú, 1983, 14, 16, 73).

The earth is represented by either a rhombus or quadrangle. It will often have a “dot” in the middle of the figure. This dot represents the center of the world and the place where the ceiba tree holds up the sky. The symbol for Venus is also a rhombus or quadrangle, but it will not have the “dot” in the center of the figure. The Maya, like us, seem to have regarded Venus as Earth’s sister planet.

Earth and Venus motif.
Woven detail from a hair ribbon.
McKay #50



The Maya of the Classic Period (AD 250-800) were excellent observers of the sky. They accurately predicted eclipses and had calculated the length of the solar year to 365.242 days. By using much more sophisticated techniques, we have calculated the solar year to be 365.2422 days, that is to say, the Maya were off by only 0.0002 days, or 17 seconds.

The Double-Headed Eagle. This motif represents the alliance of the Quiché and the Cakchiquel Maya who dominated local politics before the Spanish Conquest. The double-headed eagle was also the emblem of the Hapsburg Empire, the ruling house in Spain during the conquest and colonial periods. Because this symbol had these two meanings it is difficult to know whether the motif alludes to the Maya or Spanish world view.

Other Motifs. Many other representational or geometric motifs are common in traditional clothing. For example, sometimes a figure resembling an S lying on its side can be found in the shoulder area of a blouse. Some scholars consider this to be Cucumatz, the Plumed Serpent, the Creator. People who wore this symbol were members of the elite class or family in the community. On such pieces, you also might see a smaller version located near the base of the textile. This is Cumatz, the lowly earthworm and a symbol of the lower classes. The Maya understood that the rich could not be rich without them, a point we sometimes overlook.

On some textiles you might see a bird that looks like a chicken. Sometimes these animals are depicted with more than two feet, an indication of the embellishments a weaver might use. This is actually a wild turkey, a bird that was consumed on ceremonial occasions. The Spanish introduced the chicken, still called “Spanish turkey” in the Mayan languages today. If the

bird's head is in an unnatural position, it signifies the bird has been sacrificed.

Before the Spaniards arrived in Guatemala, the Maya venerated the deer. The Maya refer to the horse with the same word they use for the deer. The armor plating around the horses' ears may have looked like a deer's rack. Squirrels and other animals, zigzags, which have been interpreted to be a water symbol, and other geometric designs often appear in the textiles.

The Quetzal. The quetzal, a bird on the endangered species list, is an iridescent green bird with a red breast. The male quetzal has three tail feathers that measure up to three feet long. This bird was important in Maya cosmology and the Maya and Aztecs used these feathers in the rulers' headdresses. Legend has it that during a battle between the Spanish and the Quiché Maya, the Maya leader, Tecun Uman, was mortally wounded. As he lay dying on the field of battle, a quetzal flew down and took the fallen leader's heart to heaven. When he touched Tecun Uman's body, however, the bird's breast became red from the blood. This is how the quetzal got his red breast. The quetzal continues to be important in Guatemala today: it is the national bird and the nation's currency is named for it.

Quetzal bird.
Detail from a
hair ribbon.
McKay #182



Man's belt, *faja*.
The double-headed eagle motif
appears in a geometricized
form on each end of the belt.
McKay #186

Mary Pyne McKay
Guest Curator

Re-Weaving Threads of Life

The Mayan people of Guatemala and southern Mexico have known adversity for centuries, especially during the 500 years since the arrival of the Spanish and the subsequent conquest. Yet the Maya are a people with exceptional creativity that has made them survivors in the face of adversity. This exceptional creativity has enabled them to repeatedly reweave the threads of their lives to not only sustain a viable life pattern, but to create something of beauty.

An example of this tenacious creativity in a situation of adversity may be seen today at Edzna, Mexico, where ancient Mayan temples and pyramids are being rescued from the rainforest by Mayan Indians. These people are refugees who have fled violence, repression and death in Guatemala. Although living in refugee camps, they are working together with Mexican archaeologists of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia to restore part of their own heritage. Ironically the Mayan re-builders of these Mayan temple ruins are being funded by a grant from the King and Queen of Spain. Five hundred years ago, in the name of the Spanish throne and the Catholic Church, the Spanish conquistadores tore down the temples of the indigenous people they conquered and, using the cut stone and labor of the subjugated people,



Guatemalan Mayan
refugees restoring a
Mayan ceremonial site
Edzna, Mexico. 1991
Photos: Paul McKay

they built Christian churches on the same sites. The Mayan families living in the Quetzal Edzna refugee camp of the state of Campeche, Mexico, are some of the latest survivors in a history of military and governmental violence directed against the Mayan people of Guatemala. But as creative survivors they are making use of their difficult situation as refugees to learn new masonry skills and rebuild one of their own cultural sites while negotiating the terms of their return to Guatemala.

At the time of the arrival of the Spanish, the Mayan civilization was at least 3000 years old. It had begun as a simple agricultural society. Gradually the Maya developed sophisticated mathematical, astronomical, agricultural and architectural concepts. Divine kings ruled over powerful city-states from magnificent ceremonial cities in a region stretching from the Mexican Yucatán Peninsula, through what is today Guate-

mala and Belize, to Honduras. Suddenly, in the ninth century AD, the great Classical Mayan cities were deserted. What happened to the inhabitants and their culture was considered a mystery. However recent archaeological discoveries show that the Maya left their large ceremonial centers in the southern lowlands because greatly increased warfare between their city-states had made life unbearable (Demarest, 1993, 97, 111). The Maya coped with this life-threatening situation and yet maintained their culture by migrating to the surrounding areas. At this time dispersion and migration served as creative survival techniques.

Following the conquest the Spanish carried out massive destruction of the Mayan codices. As Diego da Landa, the second Bishop of Yucatán, wrote at the time: "We found a large number of books, and...we burned them all, which they regretted to an amazing degree, and which caused them much affliction" (Stuart and Stuart, 1993, 186). However, the Mayan women were still permitted to weave and they continued to

weave their ancient symbols into their textiles. These textiles, although not exactly woven texts, expressed the Mayan cultural concepts. Thus Mayan weaving and Mayan clothing served as a means of memory, cultural preservation, and identity.

An even greater threat to Mayan survival during the colonial era was the decimation of the population by unfamiliar diseases against which the Native Americans had no immunity. To this was added the extremely harsh treatment of the Maya by the Spanish and the imposition in Guatemala of the *encomienda* system under which both the land and its indigenous inhabitants were granted to Spaniards settling in the "new world". Between 1492 and 1900, the indigenous population of the Americas was reduced by 90% (according to the interpretive video of the exhibition "Seeds of Change", National Museum of Natural History, March 1993). However, by the 1950's the Mayan population of Guatemala had grown again to approximately two million. This is the estimated total at the time of the conquest (Lutz and Lovell, 1991, 29). Since 1950 the Mayan population has doubled so that there are more Maya today living in Guatemala than at any other time in history.

This resurgence of the population has taken place in spite of the political repression, forced migration and death inflicted upon the Mayas during the last 15 years. During the early 1980's the Guatemalan military conducted a counterinsurgency campaign that targeted the indigenous population as much as the guerillas.

As a result of the violence, one hundred thousand Guatemalans have been killed and forty-five thousand people have "disappeared". The Mayan Indians of the highlands have been the primary victims of this repression.

To escape the violence of the 1980's, tens of thousands of Guatemalan Maya fled to Mexico, living in United Nations' refugee camps or dispersed as undocumented refugees. Others are now in the United States, Canada, and other Central American countries. But even in the midst of this present situation of extreme adversity, there have been Mayas who have not only survived but who, while in exile, have contributed their knowledge to others. Guatemalan Mayan agricultural teachers, forced into exile by the political violence in their homeland, are now teaching agriculture to farmers in Honduras, Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile. They have carried with them an identity with and concern for the land characteristic of their Mayan culture. Other Latin American farmers whose farms are also small and situated on hillsides are finding hope in their knowledge. Through instruction in soil and water conservation techniques and labor-intensive, high production agriculture, they are teaching marginal farmers how to make their small farms viable. Thereby other people are helped to maintain the rural roots of their own cultures.

At this time in history, the challenges that most threaten the Mayan people are the continued violence in Guatemala, a worsening economic situation, and the influences of Western culture. The Guatemalan Mayan culture is being challenged by the pervasive influence of a world-wide, homogenized mass culture, modeled after the United States and Western Europe. Television sets and radios are present in most Guatemalan Mayan villages. In addition, the Mayan hand-loomed weavings have become very popular export and tourist commodities. A great many hours are required to weave on a backstrap loom the intricate weaving patterns typical of the traditional Mayan clothing, and few tourists understand the hours of labor that are required to complete a single piece of fabric. Today's non-Mayan consumers of Mayan weaving often do not recognize, nor do they want to pay for quality. This encourages weavers who badly need income in difficult economic times to produce quick, sloppy work for sale.

However, there are other forces which are calling the Maya to reaffirm their particular cultural identity. While in exile or suffering persecution, many Mayan people have found that claiming their Mayan heritage has been a source of strength. Resurgence of pride in their weaving and *traje* has a historical basis since for centuries the weaving of the Mayan women has been a central means of cultural preservation and memory. The beauty and excellence of Mayan weaving has made it one of the most highly regarded weaving traditions of the world. Thus the weaving and *traje* become an especially eloquent cultural focus and particularly useful as a means of cultural continuity. As stated by one Mayan refugee woman: "My ancestors put a lot of value in the *traje*, and it would be very sad for me and for my children to lose it." Fortunately weaving in Guatemala is not an art form that has died out. Thousands of Guatemalan Mayan

women still wear *traje* and weave high quality traditional textiles on backstrap looms.

Chon Tacatic, a Guatemalan Mayan poet, expresses his pride in the handwoven clothing of his Mayan culture, while recognizing the strong external pressures of the Western world:

The clothing of my country, yes, that is true clothing because it is not commercialized. I hope that it will not someday be commercialized because of the North American Free Trade Agreements.

Fortunately we wear that which is made by our artists, and it is an honor to walk in the street.

To express their culture in weaving, the Guatemalan women choose vibrant colors. This vibrant culture must now be woven on the warp offered by the late 20th century. Fortunately, Mayan people have repeatedly found ways to weave the threads of their life and culture in times of adversity. To express the ideas and feelings of today's Mayan Indians, I will let Mayan voices speak directly through the quotations found in the following pages.

17



Mayan woman in *traje*. Refugee camp in Mexico, 1991. As a refugee, this sixty-seven year old Mayan grandmother who always wears traditional dress has become an international mediator. She is trying to re-weave the threads of life for her people by helping negotiate the possibilities for return to Guatemala. Photo: Paul McKay

Woman's ceremonial
blouse, *huipil*.
Chichicastenango,
El Quiché.
Purchased used in
the early 1970's.
A rainbow of color
in zigzag, geometric
designs is woven
on a background of
highly prized, native
brown cotton called
cuyuscate. The rays
of the sun are
represented by red
embroidery around
the neckline.
McKay #91



Threads of Life: Interpreting Mayan Clothing

Mayan Indian Clothing: Expressions of History, Identity, and Creativity

Mayan people speak eloquently of their tradition of weaving and the significance of their *traje*, their traditional costume. In the following quotations, the Mayan speakers are not identified because of a well-founded fear that any statement might at any time be taken as criticism of the government and lead to reprisal. The one exception is Rigoberta Menchú who is an international public figure and enjoys the protections afforded her by being a Nobel Peace Laureate.

When several Mayan people are asked to explain the significance of their *traje*, they emphasize different meanings.

Through *traje*, Mayan history is retold.

The Mayan people haven't been able to explain or transmit all of their history in letters written down, so one way they have been able to maintain their history is to maintain their traje, or traditional indigenous dress...Each time the weaving is done, the history is again reconstructed.

--Anthropologist who is Mayan,
interview, 1987

El Traje

Para mí, es mi bandera,
es el arco iris de mi alma,
es un lienzo de mi memoria,
es la segunda piel del ser humano.
No es por menospreciar lo de las demás personas,
porque no las conozco,
pero es incomparable.

The Mayan Costume

For me, it is my flag,
it is the rainbow of my soul,
it is a page of my memory,
it is the second skin of the human being.
Not to negate the value of others' dress,
because I am not familiar with it,
but our traje is incomparable.

--Chon Tacatic
Mayan poet in exile, 1992

Woman weaving
on a backstrap loom.
Tactic, Alta Verapaz, 1975.
Red is the most popular
color used in the brocaded
patterns of the *huipiles*.
It is frequently woven
on a white or dark
background.
Photo: Paul McKay



20

Through weaving, Mayan ancestors are remembered and honored.

We express ourselves through our designs, through our traje. Our huipil, for instance, is like an image of our ancestors.

--Rigoberta Menchú, a Quiché Maya woman in exile, 1983

My grandmother, my great grandmother, and my great great grandmother told me to wear our traje. My ancestors put a lot of value on the traje and it would be very sad for me and my children to lose it.

--Mayan refugee woman, interview, 1991

Traje expresses identification with the wearer's community. Each town and village has its costume with distinctive patterns and colors. Mothers teach the weaving of the patterns of their particular community to their daughters. The designs are not written down; they are carried from one generation to another in the heads and hands of the women.

My mother taught me the designs of our town and my grandmother taught them to my mother. They told me that the designs of our town must always be done with care.

--Mayan woman, interview, 1993

Through weaving, a woman is able to express herself and her creativity. But creativity in weaving is expressed within the established boundaries of tradition.

My mother was one of the best weavers of the village. She could use all of our designs and each huipil she made was different, was special. The other women took note of the huipiles my mother made.

--Cakchiquel Mayan woman, interview, 1989

The colors used in the huipiles have significance. In the colors that each woman chooses you can appreciate her creativity, also the state of her soul.

--Mayan refugee woman, interview, 1992

Weaving and traditional clothing are deeply significant to the Mayas.

The Ladino (mestizo) and the society that oppresses us look at the traje as the dress Mayans wear because we are uncivilized, ignorant, backward. But within the Indian community wearing traje indicates pride, honesty, respect.

--Anthropologist who is Mayan, interview, 1987

“Red is very significant to us. It means heat, strength, all living things. It's linked to the sun, which for us is the channel to the one god, the heart of everything, of the universe. So red gives off heat and fire and red things are supposed to give life to the child. At the same time, it asks him to respect living things too.”

--Rigoberta Menchú, 1983, 14

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Woman's ceremonial blouse, *huipil*.
Tactic, Alta Verapaz.
Purchased new in the mid-1960's.
This ceremonial *huipil* is very similar to the everyday *huipil* but is larger and the designs are finer and the weaving technique is more time consuming. The *huipiles* of Tactic women are made from three woven panels and are worn loose over the skirt. McKay #114

Woman grinding corn.
San José Poaquil,
Chimaltenango, 1982.
As with the backstrap
loom, the grinding
stone used today is
identical in style to that
used over two
thousand years ago.
Photo: David Vavasaur



“ We would go and work
out in the field, and
when we got back from
the fields we would
weave. That was our
resting period. ”

--Mayan woman in
Mexico, interview, 1987

The Mayan Family in the Highlands of Guatemala: Their Lives and Their Dress

The family is the vital center of Mayan life. Girls work with their mothers and boys with their fathers in tasks they will assume as adults. Children's clothing is the same as their parents' *traje* in form, design, and color.

The Home, Food and Women's Work. Within the home, the woman has the responsibility and the authority to oversee all the daily activities. Weaving is a task that is integrated into the life of the household.

I get up early with my husband. I grind the masa and make tortillas for breakfast. Then I go and carry water from the stream. I fix lunch. I take the lunch out to my husband in the fields. I go down to the stream to wash clothes. I take care of my kids. I carry wood so I can cook and I still try to have time to do my weaving. I can't weave every day, but I try.

--Cakchiquel Mayan woman, interview, 1987

Weaving is both work and art. It is also an opportunity to sit down for awhile!

As a rule, we girls don't play, because our mothers find it hard to let a girl go off and play on her own. Girls have to learn to look after things in the home, they must learn all the little things their mothers do. Mothers never sit around at home with nothing to do. They're always busy.

--Rigoberta Menchú, 1983, 36

Since girls start learning to weave at 7 or 8 years of age, a woman's years of weaving may be quite long. Usually the older weavers are the most respected.

Even though my mother is very old now, she still is able to weave very well with glasses.

--Cakchiquel Mayan woman, interview, 1987



Woman's ceremonial blouse- *huipil*
San Juan Comalapa, Chimaltenango.
Probably made ca. 1940,
purchased in the early 1970's.
Fiestas break the routine of dawn to
dark work and are the occasion to wear
special clothing. Fine ceremonial
huipiles, made of handsome, undyed
cuyucate cotton like this one, are
highly esteemed. Its value is empha-
sized by the silk thread in the
traditional, geometric designs and the
wool used for the red shoulder bands
(characteristic of *huipiles* from
Comalapa and Poaquil). McKay #66



Grandmother weaving on
a backstrap loom.
San Martín Jilotepeque,
Chimaltenango, 1987.
Within Mayan society
grandmothers are repositories
of knowledge ranging from
marketing tips to weaving
techniques and patterns.
Photo: Paul McKay

“ **Maize is the centre of everything for us. It is our culture....Maize is used for food and for drink, and we also use the cob for bottle stoppers and food for the dogs and pigs.** ”

--Rigoberta Menchú, 1983, 54

24

In addition to providing clothing for the family, the women's weaving often provides essential income.

Once when we didn't have enough money for food, we went down to Chimaltenango, which is another village, and I sold two huipiles which had been used very little. That way we were able to make it through the hard time.

--Woman from San Martín Jilotepeque, interview, 1987

According to UNICEF (1993), 34% of Guatemalan children under the age of five suffer from moderate to severe undernutrition. This is the second-highest level in Latin America. Of the rural population, 74% live below the absolute poverty level which is defined as the income level below which a minimally nutritionally adequate diet plus essential non-food requirements are not affordable.

Land, Agriculture, and Men's Work. The land has always been the basis of the Mayan culture and of the economy. The men have the traditional responsibility for tilling the land. Agricultural products are consumed by the family or sold at regional markets. Corn (also called maize) is the main crop in highland Guatemala.

It is very special to be able to buy new clothes—it all has to do with the harvest. If there has been a good harvest, you can buy new clothes. Because it is very special to have them you treat them with respect.

--Cakchiquel Mayan woman, interview, 1992

The land is so important. We live from it. We get our clothes from it. Our shoes come from it. We get our education from it. Everything comes from the land.

--Roberto López, in the film *La Vida Cuesta*, 1977

Wealth in Guatemala means owning land. Two percent of the landowners own 65 percent of all arable land. Nine out of ten Highland Indians live on plots of land too small to meet their basic needs. Author Eduardo Galeano called them 'plots the size of graves.'

--Anthropologist who is Mayan, interview, 1987

Over half of Guatemala's rural population (54%) must try to grow enough to eat on farms of less than 3.8 acres. Most of these are Mayan Indians. Guatemala has the most unequal ratio of land distribution in Latin America, according to the most recent study of land ownership done by the U.S. Agency for International Development. Seventy-eight percent of the landowners own only 10% of the farmland.

I remember as a boy going with my father to the corn fields. As we arrived at the corner of the field, he would say a prayer before disturbing the soil. 'How absurd,' I thought. I wanted to be modern. Now that I have studied soil and water conservation I understand his wisdom.

--Fifty-year-old Mayan farmer, interview, 1991

Father and son, wearing their everyday *traje*. Nahualá, Sololá, 1977. Corn, the staff of life of the Maya, was being grown in the Mayan area by 2000 BC. The Mayan creation story says that after first failing with animals, clay and wool, the gods succeeded in fashioning people from corn. Photo: Roger Bunch



Farmer wearing the traditional *rodillera* Tecpan, Chimaltenango, 1966. Because the Mayan farms are so small most wheat is harvested by hand. Photo: Paul McKay



Brother and sister
walking together to school.
San Mateo Ixtatán,
Huehuetenango, 1977.
In the last 35 years, the
percentage of girls
attending primary school
has nearly doubled.
Photo: Roger Bunch

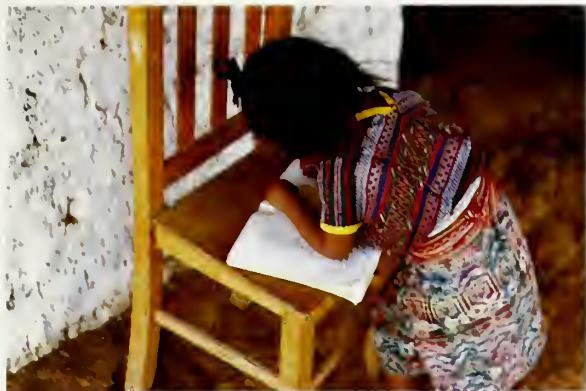


Parents and Children. Because of a shortage of land, Mayan parents are thinking more and more of education as providing a future for their children. However, passing on the ancient skills of homemaking, weaving, and farming to the next generation is also still considered very important.

To me, it is so sad that a man cannot read or write. He is nothing more than a mute. So this is why I am struggling here, working for my children so that one day they won't be mute. What we want to do is to give our children an inheritance. We have no land to give them, only a chance to study so they can learn to read and write.

--Man building a school, in the film *La Vida Cuesta*, 1977

Unfortunately, many Guatemalan children do not get a chance to attend school. According to UNICEF statistics, of those who do start first grade only 36% finish sixth grade. As a result only 63% of Guatemalan adult men are literate (the second lowest rate in Latin America) and 47% of adult women are literate (lowest rate in Latin America). If they were available, statistics for the Guatemalan Mayan population would be even worse.



Girl doing homework on a chair
San Martín Idotepecque,
Chimaltenango, 1971.
Homework and weaving are
both frequently done outside since
the light is better there and the
climate is mild.
Photo: Paul McKay

When my mother started to teach me how to weave I was very little. I was seven years old. My mother said, 'Now that you are big, you are going to learn how to weave.'

--Mayan weaver, interview, 1986

In the beginning I really couldn't do it. My mother left me with all the weaving set up very nicely. She said, 'Come sit down. You're going to learn how to weave.' When I began it was very hard. She gave me a very small weaving because I was a small girl. The first time my threads broke and I just couldn't do it. My threads got all messed up and my mother hit me. She hit my hand very hard because my hand didn't learn. Now I look back and it's all right. But at that moment I was very mad.

--Cakchiquel Maya woman,
interview, 1986



Aztec mother teaching her
fourteen-year-old daughter to
weave on the backstrap loom.
Illustration from the Codex
Mendoza, one of the few pre-
Columbian pictorial texts
which escaped Spanish
destruction (Anawalt, 1981, 2).
Courtesy of University of
Oklahoma Press

Woman's ceremonial
 blouse, *sobre-buipil*.
 San Pedro Sacatepéquez,
 Guatemala.
 Purchased used in the
 mid-1970's.
 This ceremonial *buipil* is
 distinctive as one worn by
 members of a *cofradía*.
Cofradías are religious
 societies within the
 Catholic church which
 are charged with the care
 and celebration of an
 important saint of the
 community. This *buipil*
 includes a prominent tree-
 of-life motif which is
 typical of the San Pedro
 Sacatepéquez ceremonial
buipil. McKay #100





Woman's everyday blouse, *huipil* San Pedro Sacatepequez, Guatemala. Purchased used in the late 1960's. The patterns used in the brocade portion of this *huipil* are typical of those used in the Cakchiquel-speaking region which stretches from San Pedro Sacatepequez through San Martín Jilotepeque to San Antonio Aguas Calientes. In this region the patterns are non-representational, geometric designs, similar in style to those of this carefully woven daily *huipil*. In contrast, the ceremonial *huipil* of San Pedro (see page 28) uses a very different style of weaving and pre-Columbian motifs representing birds, animals and trees. McKay #99

Religion and Celebrations: Dressing for Fiestas

In Mayan communities there is very little separation between the secular and the sacred. Life is seen as a whole. Clothing, too, has both a spiritual as well as a functional role.

From birth the girl begins to become aware, to become conscious, of who she is. Part of that knowledge comes from the fact that she puts on the corte and her own huipil. She never asks why she has these clothes. Little by little she learns to distinguish which are her daily clothes and which are those for ceremonial use.

--Mayan woman in exile, interview, 1992

Ceremonial *huipiles* are usually larger and more heavily brocade than everyday *huipiles*. Often the ceremonial *huipil* is worn over the everyday one. In some towns the motifs and style of weaving used for the ceremonial *huipil* are quite different from those used for the daily *huipil*.

The prayers usually ask the earth for permission to plant our crops at sowing time, to give us a good harvest, and then to give thanks with all our might, with all our being, for a good harvest.

--Rigoberta Menchú, 1983, 57

Copal is a sacred ingredient for our people. We use it to express our feelings for the earth, so that she will allow us to cultivate her. Copal is the resin of a tree. It has a smell like incense. We burn it and it gives off a very strong smell: a smoke with a very rich, delicious aroma. We use the candle, water and lime a great deal in our ceremonies. We use candles to represent the earth, water and maize, which is the food of man. We believe that our people are made of maize.

--Rigoberta Menchú, 1983, 57



Easter procession. Nebaj, El Quiché, 1977. For this special occasion the women are wearing the ceremonial *huipil* of Nebaj. This is a *sobre-huipil* and is worn over the everyday *huipil*. To show reverence, a woman covers her head with a folded cloth, which is also woven on a backstrap loom. Photo: Roger Bunch

Small boy selling
wheat weaving
along the road.
Sololá, Sololá, 1969.
Even small children
assist the family
by selling souvenirs
to tourists.
Photo: Paul McKay



Woman's hair ribbons,
cintas.

These three *cintas* show
the simplified designs
and non-traditional uses
now seen in Mayan
weaving.

left: Traditional wide hair
ribbon from Jacaltenango,
Huehuetenango, ca. 1960,
featuring a variety of
carefully woven birds and
flowers; original fringe
has worn out and been
replaced. McKay #182

center: Newer
Jacaltenango hair ribbon,
ca. 1975, cut and
converted into a belt with
buckle for the tourist
market. McKay #172

right: Poor reproduction
of a Jacaltenango hair
ribbon, ca. 1980, made in
Guatemala City as a
cheap item for tourists.
McKay #116



Weaving and Mayan Clothing: A Reflection of Cultural Preservation and Change

Since the 1970's, weaving and traditional costume
have been affected by the influx of tourism and
political repression. In spite of these factors
bringing change, Mayan weaving and *traje*
survive.

Weaving and the Tourist Market. For many
years Guatemala has been a favorite vacation
destination for tourists interested in indigenous
cultures, Mayan archeology and a spring-like
climate. In 1991 more than 509,000 tourists
visited Guatemala, generating \$210 million in
foreign exchange. The tourist industry generated
work for approximately 50,000 Guatemalans
(Barry, 1992, 118).

Tourists to Guatemala like to buy vibrantly
colored weavings as souvenirs. As a conse-
quence, Mayan women turn away from their rich
weaving tradition to produce smaller pieces with
less complex patterns and in colors attractive to
tourists. They also cut up old *huipiles* and sew
them on bags and jackets for sale.

“ To be identified by your clothing as an Indian implies various things to the military. It implies rebelliousness. It implies that one is a subversive because they believe that Indians are doing many things against the government. ”

--Anthropologist who is Mayan, interview, 1987

Politics and Mayan Weaving. Since 1954, 100,000 Guatemalans have been killed and 45,000 have “disappeared” as a result of political violence. It was Guatemala who added the word “disappeared” to the language of human rights abuse. The majority of those killed were not combatants but Mayan peasants. For example, the government’s scorched earth operations of the early 1980’s destroyed 440 indigenous villages and killed at least 30,000 persons. Wearing *traje* takes on a different dimension when living under political repression.

The women in different areas wear different huipiles. The army is so astute that they can detect in a moment where a woman comes from by her blouse, her huipil. If they see a woman in the capital city who is from Patzún, she will be suspect. They will say, ‘Aba!, out there in Patzún there are guerrilla movements; there are people’s populist organizations.’ So the Indians say, ‘Well, it is not to our advantage to use traje.’

--Anthropologist who is Mayan, interview, 1986



Training Army officers to identify *huipil* styles ca. 1983. A cadet at the Politécnica Military Academy trains other cadets to recognize the origins of various items of *traje*. He holds a *tzute* from San Juan Sacatepéquez. The Politécnica is Guatemala’s West Point. Photo: Jean-Marie Simon. ©1987

After the scorched earth operations there were close to one million internal refugees within Guatemala. These were persons who had been forced to flee their homes because of the violence but who remained within Guatemala. In order to blend in and not be noticed by the police or military many Mayans had to abandon their *traje*. In a conversation about changing to Western clothing in order to be safe, two women relate their grief:

I can't get accustomed to taking off my traje. I can't adjust to putting on other clothes. I can only wear other clothes for an hour or two.

--Mayan refugee woman, 1986

I can't leave my traje, it's part of me. Without my dress I don't feel calm inside, I feel like I'm missing something, something from me...

--Mayan refugee woman, 1986

Many other families fled Guatemala and relocated in the neighboring countries of Honduras and Mexico.

The 1980s...marked a decade of mass Indian emigration. A people who for so long had clutched tenaciously to its land fled on foot before the advancing terror that swept across the highlands...One measure of this refugee popula-

tion is the number of Guatemalans living under United Nations protection. In Mexico, some 40,000 Guatemalans inhabit UN-sponsored camps, while in Belize there are 1200, in Honduras 380, and in Nicaragua 400. But the majority of those who have fled Guatemala are not tabulated as official refugees. Instead, they live and work in the shadows as undocumented residents, mainly in Mexico and the United States.

--Tom Barry, *Central America Inside Out*, 1991, 264

In Mexico it was also necessary for the Mayan women to stop wearing their *traje* in order not to stand out.

It is really hard to accept a new kind of clothing; inside I feel I will never accept it. Because you feel that you have lost something, you feel of less value. I feel lost. I feel lost within the community.

--Undocumented Mayan woman in Mexico, interview, 1992

The world of a refugee is so small, the space the equivalent of the inside of a tortoise shell.

--Mayan refugee in Mexico, letter, 1993



Woman's blouses, *huipiles*

left: *Huipil* made in 1989 by a Mayan refugee woman from San Martín Jilotepeque who now lives outside of Guatemala. McKay #70

right: Old wedding *huipil* from San Martín Jilotepeque. McKay #71.
When political repression forces Mayans to flee Guatemala, the women carry the traditional skills and motifs in their hands and minds. The refugee woman who wove the new *huipil* on the left did so without the benefit of examples or written patterns. When compared with the older wedding *huipil* made in Guatemala the similarity is astonishing. Mayan women continue doing fine weaving in exile.

Persecution Brings Renewed Appreciation of Culture. It is significant that the experience of persecution and exile has made many refugees more appreciative of their culture. Most of the quotations used in this catalogue are from refugees because in persecution and adversity Mayans have become newly aware and outspoken about the importance of their *traje*, ceremonies, and language. The beauty and widely recognized quality of the Mayan textiles have made them a focal point for renewed cultural identity.

For some victims of persecution embracing their Mayan heritage becomes a special source of strength in times of great adversity.

When one has suffered discrimination and then the oppression of incarceration, one starts to feel like one is not important...so many people are telling you, 'You're not important.' You also start to believe that your traje isn't worth anything. Now, after studying what the colors and designs in the huipiles mean, I feel more Indian, more part of the culture. Learning about the designs and colors of my traje has been the most important part of my healing from the torture this year.

--Torture survivor in exile in Mexico, interview, 1987

“ Exile kills the heart, little by little, and violently. At times one can't make sense of anything: negotiations for peace in order to continue war; a Free Trade Agreement while human beings continue as slaves to material things. What those on top, those who direct the world, pursue is power. I don't want more exile and it shouldn't exist for anyone. ”

--Mayan in exile in Mexico, letter, 1992

She Stands for All Indigenous Peoples

Donna Lee Van Cott

Her name Rigoberta Menchú is unfamiliar to most North Americans, an Latin American spend the students in multi-undergraduate literature where Ms. Menchú's autobiography has staple. But the recent of this year's Nobel prize to Menchú, a Guatemalan Indian, the same Americans, North and served the 500th anniversary of the meeting of the old worlds should resonate the hemisphere. The Nobel Prize - one of Western's highest accolades - year to a poor Indian woman, by itself, is such an award. She a revolution or a solvent; she has brought peace accord.

achievement is her own. She symbolizes of marginalized and peoples throughout the in self-imposed exile for 11 years, she of Spanish, learning and write at age 19. chance is that there like her. As Menchú autobiography: "The thing is that what has happened to

many other people too ... my personal experience is the reality of a whole people."

In her international public appearances, Menchú dresses in traditional Maya *traje*, the vibrantly colored and patterned costume worn by women of her Indian community. She thus serves as a visual reminder that, in various, often remote pockets of the continent, centuries-old cultures indigenous to this hemisphere continue to exist and evolve.

Over half the Guatemalan population is Mayan. The country's Indian communities, once largely autonomous, have resisted pressure to bow to government dictate and assimilate into Guatemalan society. The result has been a cycle of violence.

Though the tiny armed insurgency in Guatemala has always been separate from the Maya's larger political resistance, the military's counterinsurgency policy seeks to relocate and sometimes physically liquidate Indian communities in order to deprive the guerrillas of possible support. This also suits the larger political strategy of breaking up the stubbornly autonomous community units in order to incorporate the Maya into Guatemalan society.

Upon Menchú's nomination for the Nobel Prize, the Guatemalan government denounced her as a communist guerrilla - a charge she denies. But she is, in fact, a threat to the Guatemalan state,



RIGOBERTA MENCHÚ: The Nobel Peace Prize winner at a demonstration against oppression.

because there are millions of Rigoberta Menchús in Guatemala whose cultural distinctiveness, as Guatemalan scholar Carol Smith points out, is a "visible repudiation" of the state's attempt to forge a nation, or a national culture, through force.

But Menchú's sudden ascension to international renown should resonate beyond her tragic country. In virtually every country in Latin America, indigenous cultures are challenging the legitimacy of nation-states that exercise dominion over their ancestral territory. They challenge not just the state's disposition of their lands, languages, resources, and heritage, but the very concept of national identity and national culture.

Throughout the history of Latin America, governments have wrestled with the "Indian question." Policy recommendations have basically split between as-

similation and separate development. Current indigenous political ideology clearly favors the latter course.

In Bolivia and Ecuador, federations of Indian peoples have challenged the legitimacy of the Hispanicized state, demanding that their governments acknowledge the local autonomy and cultural separateness of the indigenous peoples.

As these nations and others in Latin America struggle to consolidate recent democratic gains they must also address indigenous groups' assertion of a variety of nationalisms, an assertion that requires a more tolerant and pluralistic model of democracy.

When the award was announced a few weeks ago, spontaneous celebrations and mourning occurred all over Guatemala as Menchú prepared to let temala, wire services that two indigenous wo-

Rigoberta Menchú at a demonstration in Sololá. From the *Christian Science Monitor*, November 4, 1992, p. 19. Courtesy of AFP (Agency French Press) International Newspictures

Threads of Life: Link to the Future.

What hurts Indians most is that our costumes are considered beautiful, but it's as if the person wearing it didn't exist.

--Rigoberta Menchú, 1983, 204

We want a dignified life, with houses and schools, with the right to wear our *trajes*.... Many people used to think that the indigenous were myths of the past, ruins that had died. We are saying that they have not killed us and that they will not kill us now. We're stepping forth to say 'No. We are here. We live.' The road is very long. Peace for Guatemalans is not just the absence of war, but a dignified home, the ability to dream that our children can be scientists, can have their own homes.... We should have gardens for our children and dignified houses. In the 20th century, that's how things should be.

--Rigoberta Menchú, Fall 1992

Rigoberta Menchú, a Mayan in exile, received the Nobel Peace Prize for speaking out for the rights of Mayan Indians.

Hoy nació diferente el sol

El quetzal voló sobre Tikal
muy de madrugada
el gallito encantado de Cerro Alto
aleteó diferente

Hoy nació diferente el sol
en toda Guatemala
entre las ramas de pinos,
entre las hojas de milpas
ya sazonadas
doradas por el Dios relumbrante

Los gusanos medidores
muy de madrugada
empezaron a medir al mundo,
empezaron a medir
la conciencia del hombre

Las flores de cartucho
muy de madrugada
besaron al aire...se besaron

Las mariposas ausentes
encapulladas recobran vida
para volar mientras que el sol
sube y sube

Hoy Guatemala amaneció diferente
porque Rigoberta Menchú
encabeza su nombre en todo el mundo.
Guatemala, Guatemala!

--Chon Tacatic, Mayan in exile in
Mexico, 16 de octubre 1992,
dedicated to Rigoberta Menchú

Today the sun rose differently

The quetzal flew over Tikal
very early in the morning
the joyful rooster of Cerro Alto
flapped its wings differently

Today the sun rose differently
in all Guatemala
through the branches of the pines
through the leaves of ripened corn
made golden
by God's splendor

The inch worms
early this morning
began to take measure of the world
began to measure the conscience
of humanity

The calla lilies
early in the morning
kissed the air...they kissed each other

The absent butterflies
encapsulated in cocoons take on new life
to mount on wings while the sun
climbs and climbs

Guatemala dawned differently today
because Rigoberta Menchú
places its name before the whole world.
Guatemala, Guatemala!

Checklist of the Exhibition

according to Country,
Department,
Town and Village

GUATEMALA

Huehuetenango

1. Colotenango
Woman's blouse: McKay #40
2. San Mateo Ixtatán
Girl's blouse: McKay #41
3. Todos Santos Cuchumatán
Boy's shirt: McKay #42
Boy's or man's bag: McKay #52b
4. Soloma
Man's tunic: McKay #39
5. Jacaltenango
Bag: McKay #183
Hair ribbon: McKay #182
Hair ribbon: McKay #172
6. Aguacatán
Woman's hair ribbon: McKay #50

San Marcos

7. San Pedro Sacatepéquez
Skirt: McKay #14a;
Woman's blouse: McKay #13

Totonicapán

8. Momostenango
Blanket: McKay #140
Servilleta: McKay #121.1; #212
9. Totonicapán
Carrying cloth: McKay #208
Woman's hair ribbon: McKay #74
Mourning belt: McKay #228
Woman's mourning belt: McKay #106

Sololá

- Department of Sololá
- Infant boy's shirt: McKay #115
 10. Sololá
Man's kilt: Adams #7; McKay #31
School bag: McKay #88.3
Child's bag: McKay #48
 11. Santa Catarina Palopó
Boy's shirt: McKay #21
Boy's pants: McKay #23; #24
Girl's blouse: McKay #18
 12. San Antonio Palopó
Woman's blouse: McKay #16
Man's shirt: McKay #15
Man's kilt: Adams #3
Baby girl's blouse: Adams #12
 13. San Pedro La Laguna
Man's shirt: McKay #26
Man's belt: McKay #27
Man's pants: McKay #28
 14. Nahuala
Woman's belt: McKay #35
Man's shirt: McKay #38
Man's ceremonial sash: McKay #186
Man's ceremonial headwear: McKay #37
Man's shoulder bag: Adams #9
Chest: McKay #139; #151; #223
Toy grinding stones: McKay #196
Table with drawers: McKay #2
Santo, St. Anthony of Padua: McKay #5
Box with lid: McKay #151

15. Panajachel
Woman's skirt: Adams #16
Woman's carrying cloth: Adams #1
Woman's belt: McKay #175
Man's shoulder bag: McKay #17
Ball: McKay #129
Machete: McKay #229
16. San Pablo La Laguna
Rope: McKay #150; #230
Carrying bag: McKay #149

El Quiché

17. Santo Tomás Chichicastenango
Woman's carrying cloth: McKay #93;
#168
Woman's ceremonial blouse: McKay #91; #92
Woman's belt: McKay #94.1&2
Man's sandals: McKay #15
Necklace: McKay #87.1, 2, 4; #220
Basket with lids: McKay #126;
#144.1&2
Child's sandals: McKay #156; #157
Girl's blouse: McKay #95
Girl's skirt: McKay #96
Man's pants: Adams #13
Man's jacket: Adams #14
Man's sash: Adams #15
Man's headdress: McKay #89
Utility cloth: Adams #17
18. Nebaj
Woman's blouse: McKay #51
19. Chajul
Man's bag: McKay #52a
20. Zacuapa
Man's shoulder bag: McKay #88.1
Man's headdress: McKay #190
Woman's blouse: McKay #55
Woman's belt: McKay #54
Woman's carrying cloth: McKay #53

Baja Verapaz

21. Rabinal
Woman's carrying cloth: McKay #73
Water jug: McKay #1
Gourd bowl: McKay #143

Chimaltenango

- Department of Chimaltenango
- Pre-Columbian stone adze: McKay #248.1, 2
Pre-Columbian figurine fragment (head): McKay #247
Pre-Columbian spindle whorl: McKay #246
 22. Patzún
Woman's belt: McKay #59.1-4
 23. Chiquil, aldea of Patzún
Man's shirt material: McKay #60c
 24. Tecpán Guatemala
Woman's ceremonial blouse: McKay #64
Woman's belt: McKay #201
 25. San Juan Comalapa
Woman's ceremonial blouse: McKay #66; #67
Woman's blouse: McKay #184
Girl's blouse: McKay #189
Wall hanging: McKay #253
 26. San Martín Jilotepeque
Woman's blouse: McKay #72
Woman's ceremonial blouse: McKay #71
Servilleta: McKay #122.1, 2
Woman's mourning blouse: McKay #163
Girl's blouse: McKay #189

27. Chimaltenango
Drinking gourd: McKay #249
Tumpline: McKay #148
Wooden spoon: McKay #210
28. San Jacinto, aldea of Chimaltenango
Bag: McKay #121.2
29. Patzún
Servilleta: McKay #121.5
30. San José Poaquil
Woman's blouse: McKay #65

Sacatepéquez

31. Santa María de Jesús
Carrying cloth: McKay #81
Woman's blouse: McKay #79
Man's shirt: Reynolds #1
32. San Antonio Aguas Calientes
Backstrap loom with weaving: McKay #75
Woman's skirt: McKay #11
Woman's blouse: McKay #85
Wall hanging: McKay #84
33. Sumpango
Woman's blouse: McKay #77
34. Santo Domingo Xenacoj
Baby cap: McKay #7b
35. San Mateo Milpas Altas, aldea of Antigua
Skirt: McKay #78
Grinding stones: McKay #195.1&2
36. Antigua
Pre-Columbian figured vessel fragment: McKay #245
Apron: McKay #82.a
Floor mat: McKay #138
Hand broom: McKay #145
Basket with handle: McKay #4
Tortilla basket: McKay #141
Loofa sponge: McKay #235
Pitcher: McKay #209
Ball and cup game: McKay #131
Twirling toy: McKay #203
Toy clay dishes: McKay #198.1-4
Fan: McKay #125b
Skirt: McKay #12
Candles and candlestick: McKay #193; #232
Pitcher in shape of an owl: McKay #210
Cups and bowls: McKay #250-253
Incense burner: Hinshaw #1
37. Santiago Sacatepéquez
Woman's belt: McKay #171

Guatemala

- Lake Amatitlán
- Pre-Columbian incense burner: McKay #243
 38. San Juan Sacatepéquez
Woman's blouse: McKay #98
 39. San Pedro Sacatepéquez
Woman's ceremonial blouse: McKay #100; #102
Woman's blouse: McKay #99
Girl's ceremonial blouse: McKay #103
Girl's skirt: McKay #104
Child's belt: McKay #176
Woman's ceremonial belt: McKay #173
 40. San José Nacahuil
Woman's ceremonial blouse: McKay #105
 41. Chuarrancho
Woman's ceremonial blouse: McKay #101
 42. Chimauntla
Pair of ceramic doves: McKay #231a&b

43. Guatemala City
Shawl: McKay #217
Wall hanging: McKay #225
Hair ribbon: McKay #116
Tourist bag with old blouse fragment: McKay #200

Alta Verapaz

44. Tactic
Woman's ceremonial blouse: McKay #113
Girl's blouse: McKay #113
Girl's skirt: McKay #108
45. Cobán
Necklace: McKay #219
Wedding chain: McKay #236
Servilleta: McKay #121.6

Quezaltenango

46. Salcajá
Woman's skirt: McKay #205
Tie-dyed thread: Adams #19
Girl's skirt: McKay #78
47. Quezaltenango
Baby rattle: McKay #194.1
48. San Martín Sacatepéquez
Man's shirt: Adams #4
Man's cape: Adams #6
Man's pants: Adams #5
Man's belt: Adams #2
Man's headdress: Adams #8

Escuintla

49. Palín
Woman's belt: McKay #178
Woman's carrying cloth: McKay #164

General Highlands area:

- Woman's belt: McKay #180
Woman's skirt: McKay #10
Man's belt: McKay #118.1
Man's hat: McKay #187.1
Large basket: McKay #122
Machete: Adams #10
Varieties of dried corn: McKay #240
Belt: McKay #117
Boy's belt: McKay #22
Snail broom: McKay #146
Doll: McKay #252; #253
Necklace: Adams #11
Mask: Adams #22 #27;
McKay #241-243
Coin purse: McKay #33; #47; #211
Food mill: McKay #270

HONDURAS

- General
- Man's hat: McKay #187.2
 50. Guatemalans in exile
Woman's blouse: McKay #70

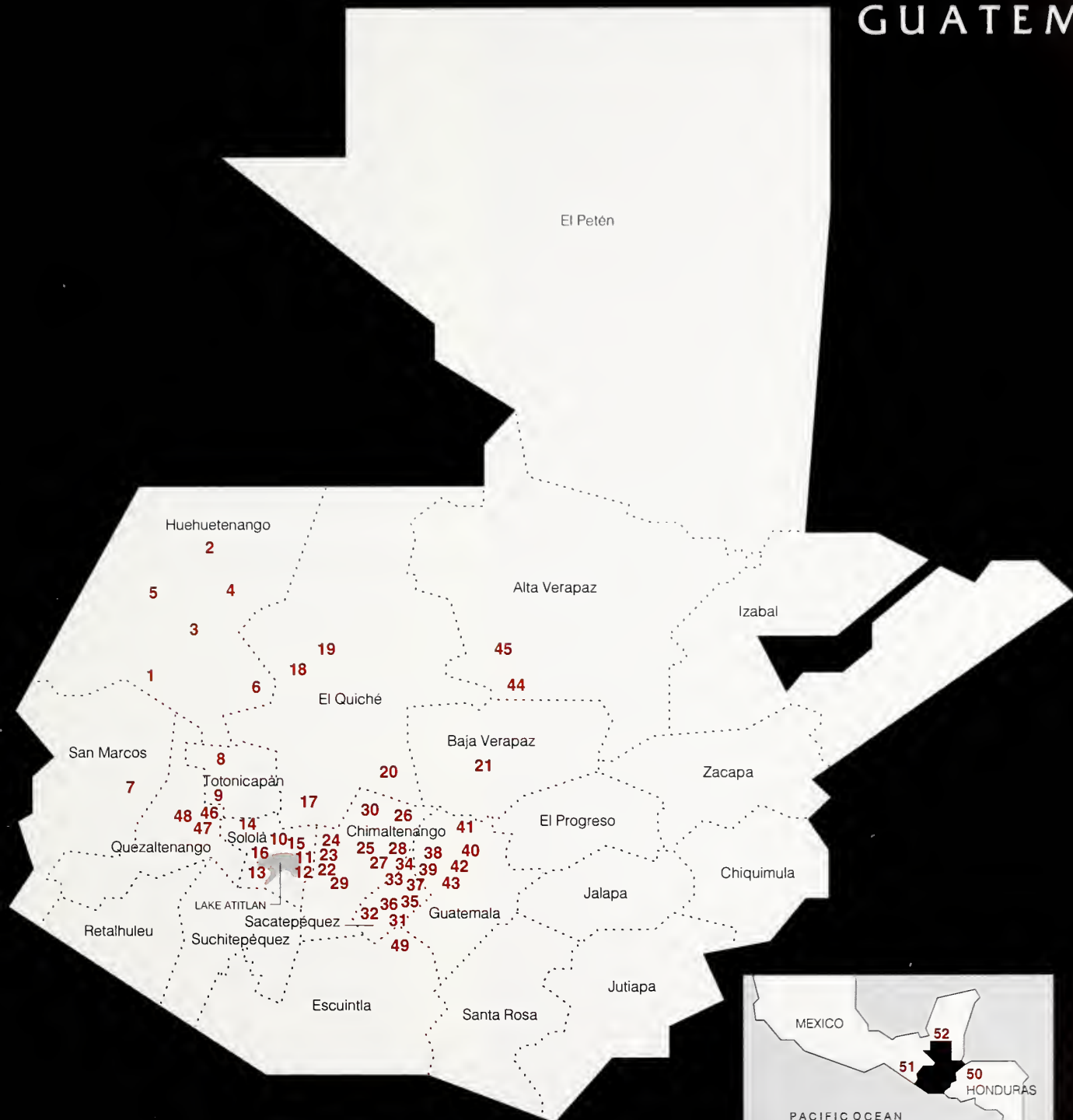
MEXICO

- General
- Man's hat: McKay #207; #220; #227
Hoe: McKay #192
Conal (clay griddle): McKay #234
Cooking pot: McKay #237
Calendar: McKay #239
 51. 52. Guatemalan refugee camps
Bag: McKay #121.1; #121.4

Lenders to the exhibition

- Mary, Paul, and Christine McKay
Walter and Marilyn Adams
Stan Reynolds
Robert Hinshaw

GUATEMALA



Guatemala: Statistical Profile

Population

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Population (1) | 9,500,000 |
| Annual growth rate (1) | 2.9% |
| Urban population (1) | 39.4% (1990) |

Society

| | |
|---|-----|
| Religion (4) | |
| Catholic | 65% |
| Protestant | 33% |
| Life expectancy at birth (1) | 64 |
| Under 5 mortality per 1,000 live births (1) | 92 |
| Maternal mortality per 1,000,000 births | 200 |
| Moderate to severe undernutrition (0-4 yrs) (1) | 34% |
| Literacy rate - male (1) | 63% |
| Literacy rate - female (1) | 47% |

Land Distribution (5)

2% of farms comprise 65% of farmland
78% of farms comprise 10% of farmland

Economy (1990)

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (2) | US \$8,208 million |
| GDP per capita (2) | US \$918 |
| Foreign Debt (3) | US \$2,602 million |

Principal Exports (1988) (6)

| | |
|----------|---------------|
| | US \$ million |
| Coffee | 377.0 |
| Bananas | 74.0 |
| Sugar | 64.9 |
| Cardamom | 40.1 |
| Cotton | 34.3 |

Main Trading Partners (1987) (6)

| Export To | % of total | Imports From | % of total |
|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| USA | 50.7 | USA | 40.5 |
| West Germany | 6.6 | Japan | 6.6 |
| El Salvador | 6.2 | Germany | 5.9 |

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3. United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean*, 1991.
4. *Europa Yearbook*, 1988.
5. US AID, *Land and Labor in Guatemala: An Assessment*, 1982.
6. Economist Intelligence Unit, *Guatemala Country Report*, No. 3, 1989.

Organizations Working on Issues Related to Guatemala

Americas Watch

1522 K Street NW, Suite 910
Washington, DC 20005

Central America Resource Center

PO Box 2327
Austin, TX 78768

Committee in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala

225 Lafayette Street, Room 212
New York, NY 10012

Dunamis Peace Institute

4102 29th Street
Mount Rainier, MD 20712-1820

Guatemalan Education Center

CSJ Justice and Peace Office
1497 East Iron
Salina, KS 67402

Guatemala Human Rights Commission, USA

1359 Monroe Street NE
Washington, DC 20017

Guatemala News and Information Bureau

P.O. Box 28594
Oakland, CA 94604

Guatemala Scholars Network

c/o Marilyn Moors
Route 1, Box 55
Friendsville, MD 21531

Mennonite Central Committee

21 South 12th Street
PO Box 500
Akron, PA 17501-9989

National Central American Health Rights Network

P.O. Box 202
New York, NY 100276

Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA)

1314 14th Street NW #17
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Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

110 Maryland Ave NE
Washington, DC 20002

Women for Guatemala

PO Box 53421
Washington, DC 20009

Suggestions for Further Reading

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